

VZCZCXR08100  
PP RUEHG1 RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #0158 0340440  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 030440Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9861  
INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0111  
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RHMFIS/SCTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000158

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF SE WILLIAMSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU  
SUBJECT: CHAD-SUDAN BORDER INCIDENTS; HUMANITARIAN AID DISRUPTED

REFERENCE: (A) NDJAMENA 64

(B) KHARTOUM 64  
(C) KHARTOUM 35  
(D) KHARTOUM 150

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In response to Chadian military bombing along the West Darfur border, Sudan has escalated its military response in the area and the Sudanese Minister of Defense visited El Geneina with senior SAF officers January 28. Humanitarian operations outside El Geneina have been interrupted as the security situation deteriorates, although the situation inside El Geneina is reportedly calm. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) In response to recent Chadian bombing along the Sudan-Chad border (and in some cases in West Darfur) Sudanese Minister of Defense General Abd-al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn visited El-Geneina, West Darfur, January 28 with a large group of senior SAF officers. Husayn announced that Chadian aggression against Sudan was unjustified and said Sudan is capable of repelling any aggression on its border. Observers reported that Husayn visited Government of Sudan (GOS) local security committees, local Arab community leaders, and border patrol units reportedly to revive weakened links between local groups and the GOS.

¶3. (SBU) On January 29 a number of independent sources reported hearing helicopters and explosions in the vicinity of the Chad-Sudan border near the town of Beida, located 100 kilometers southwest of the West Darfur capital of El-Geneina. International NGO Tearfund staff reported hearing an explosion at 2:50 AM on January 29, followed by additional explosions several hours later on the Chadian side of the border. In the wake of these events, Tearfund and the international NGO Concern relocated 27 staff from the border towns of Ararah, Beida, Masterie, and Kongo Haraza to El-Geneina as a precaution. UNAMID transported the staff to El-Geneina without incident the evening of January 29.

¶3. (SBU) Tearfund program coordinator told poloff on January 31 that 62,000 beneficiaries, mostly Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), have been affected with reduced nutritional, health promotion, and water and sanitation programming. He said that Tearfund would decide within a few days whether to return. International NGO Concern country director told poloff on January 30 that programs operating north of El-Geneina (ref B) remain suspended with local staff providing only essential nutritional services to the 160,000 affected beneficiaries. The country director said that he expected UNAMID to provide an assessment of the security situation this weekend but was pessimistic on restarting the program.

¶4. (SBU) Observers reported a number of Chadian other armed groups (COAG) in the Chadian border town of Adre located 20 kilometers west of El-Geneina and noted a number of explosions on the morning of January 29. Across the border, El-Geneina commissioner Dr. Al-Watan Fadlallah blamed a break away faction of the Justice and equality Movement (JEM) for recent local attacks against the neighboring area of Sirbe and noted the enhanced security by local and GOS forces.

Observers confirmed to embassy media reports that Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) recently reinforced El-Geneina and believe that the town is safe from direct attack by either Sudanese or Chadian rebels. A university professor in El-Geneina told poloff on January 30 that the town is peaceful and the citizens have no restrictions on their movements.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: The humanitarian aid situation in the border areas of West Darfur continues to deteriorate. In mid-January, international NGO programs north of El-Geneina (ref B) were largely suspended due to cross border incidents. Now, military actions have caused humanitarian aid curtailment south of El-Geneina. Post expects military actions on both sides to continue if not escalate, unless of course the recent GOS-supported Chadian rebel surge toward N'djamena is successful (ref D)).

FERNANDEZ